Kimsquit man described ~~to the writer how~~ how, when encamped on King Island, he had almost been struck by a stone which seemed to fall from a tree. He realised that it must have been thrown by a ghost, and his opinion was confirmed when he found he could not speak. He instantly built a fire and threw on it both food and clothing as offerings to the dead, which had the effect of loosening his ~~mouth~~ tongue. Pondering on the reason, he remembered that one of his relatives had died ~~there~~ not far away, and ~~that~~ he had failed to give him any presents for a long time. In this case, as in many others, the stone was visible, though the thrower remained invisible.

Even
Near approach to ghosts is usually dangerous. The same man related how when hunting, he heard what he thought was the note of a water ouzel, and passed by heedlessly. In a few minutes he thought he heard the cackling of geese but the sound, instead of continuing to come from a pond a few hundred yards away, rapidly ~~drew near~~ approached the hunter along the path. He raised his musket and ~~drew into the side of the path~~ slipped aside, though the sound went ~~beside~~ past him, down the path, he could see nothing. Terrified, he realised that he had been near two ghosts, and rushed back to the village. A shaman was called who informed him that he had met his dead father's sister and another relative, both of whom were hungry. The hunter, too ~~ill~~ weak from fright to help himself, watched the shaman light a fire and throw on it a considerable amount of food and goods. Finally, he ripped the hunter's shirt from his back and threw it into the flames. ~~No ill~~ Consequently, no harm resulted from this experience.

Ghosts, like all other supernatural beings, can of course deaden their powers so that their appearance does not injure a beholder. Only a few years ago a certain Qoxolan i, whose ancestral name was Lo'qwot, was encamped at Saskwanuts on the Labouchere Channel side of King Island. At dusk a woman came to his fire and proceeded to warm her cape. He recognised from her green face that she must be a ghost and boldly asked her what she wanted.

"I have been searching for mussels," she replied, "but without success."

In an instant she vanished and Qoxolan i experienced neither good nor evil from this apparition. It is possible that this being was not a ghost as he had thought, but really one of the under-sea dwellers who have somewhat the same appearance.

Since ghosts, like other supernatural beings, are ~~considered~~ believed to possess both wisdom and power, it might be thought that they would frequently be invoked. Instead

death has altered their character to such an extent that they are avoided and kept at a distance. The only time ~~when~~ that an appeal is made to a ghost is ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ when a young person dies without apparent reason and the survivors wish to learn the cause ~~of death~~. The body is buried with a long cord consisting of alternate strands of dyed and undyed cedar-bark ~~in the mouth~~ projecting from its mouth and stretching to the surface. The relative desiring information ~~calls~~ summons several shamans whose powers have been obtained from ghosts, and for four days feeds them lavishly. On the fifth morning they proceed to the grave, accompanied by relatives of the deceased, and pound on the ground with sticks, asking the dead person whether or not he had been murdered, and if so, ~~what is~~ the name of the murderer. It is said that in former times the voice of the deceased could always be plainly heard giving the desired information. This ceremony has not been carried out for many years and exact details are not known by any of the living Bella Coola. It seems clear that ventriloquism must have been employed, ~~requiring~~ making impossible active deception on the part of the shamans.

It was difficult to ascertain ~~xxxxxx~~ to what extent shamans believed in their own powers to understand the speech of ghosts. There is no doubt that the Bella Coola are easily influenced by suggestion, and if an individual is told that he has received help from a ghost, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ it is not difficult for him to believe that ~~this~~ such has been the case. Further, his fellows are convinced of his powers, a circumstance which does not fail to affect him. It may be stated ~~with confidence~~ definitely that in many cases shamans ~~are convinced of~~ have some confidence in their own powers, although they do not hesitate to use deception to increase their prestige. This point will be considered in greater detail in the following chapter.

Accounts of Experiences with Ghosts.

Much of the information concerning ghosts is contained in stories which have been handed down for generations and which are considered to be historical records. Some of these must be deferred to the chapter on folk-lore and shamanism, but the following are sufficient to explain the source of many Bella Coola beliefs on this subject.

..... A Rescue from Ghosts. .....

Long, long ago, there lived a little girl who used to cry incessantly. One evening

when she was disturbing the whole household by weeping, her father said angrily to her:

"Keep quiet or the ghosts will come and carry you off."

Even this threat did not silence her; later on, all her companions went to bed, leaving her alone, crying, in the central part of the house. After a time her father noticed that his daughter's sobs had grown fainter, though she seemed to be weeping in the same manner as before. He went out to investigate and found her place vacant. Listening intently, he realised that the sound came from below; the ghosts had come for her. He roused the household and called in all the men of the village to dig for the girl with sharpened spruce branches. Her crying was still audible and the diggers were directed by it. Sometimes they seemed to be on the point of overtaking her, but always her ghost-captor eluded his pursuers by moving sideways through the ground instead of continuing his direct descent. At length the men gave up their task in despair, leaving the mourning father and mother to lament the former's rash remark which had brought the ghosts.

The parents of the girl consulted all the village shamans, one of whom formulated a scheme to rescue the victim. He told her relatives to remove alternate boards from the roof of the house, and to place on each remaining one a chamber-pot filled with urine. He stationed a helper beside each vessel, ready to upset it when he gave the signal, and requested everyone else to leave the house. When these arrangements had been carried out, the shaman went alone to the cemetery, passed through the earth to the land of ghosts, and invited the wraiths to assemble in the house for a feast. They gladly accepted, and the hidden assistants watched them enter, one or two at a time, as if they had been human beings bidden to a ceremony. At last all had arrived except the principal chief, who was to sit in the central seat behind the fire. The feast could not proceed without him, so the ghosts sent a special messenger down below to summon him. It was this chief who had stolen the child, and the excitement of the watchers became intense as he entered, carrying the girl concealed beneath his cloak. Though thus covered, her cries betrayed her presence to the hidden relatives. When all had taken their places, the shaman gave the previously arranged signal and his accomplices tipped the urine over the ghosts. Wild confusion followed. The ghosts rush-

ed to and fro, shewing their anger and resentment by furious whistling and incoherent gurgling. At last they rushed from the house, abandoning the child. They could still be heard in the vicinity of the village, so the shaman directed the people to scatter urine all around the houses which drove away the unwelcome visitors. The use of this as a deterrent was first learnt on this occasion.

The parents of the stolen child were overjoyed at her rescue, but it was soon apparent that their daughter had changed. She would not eat; in fact, she acted as if she could not see food placed before her. The next morning she rose early and was seen to eat the ashes of fish that had been burnt as torches. From this it was recognised that the child was really dead. Thenceforth, instead of being given food in the usual way, her meals were thrown into the fire from the ashes of which she received her nourishment. Ever since that time, the Bella Coola have recognised that food for the dead must be thrown on a fire.

.....

An Attempt to Rescue a Dead Wife.

Two or three hundred years after the first settlement of the earth, a brave Kimsquit hunter, Nu'skoɓɛlɛxɛmx, set out with his three sons to hunt seals. His wife was in an advanced state of pregnancy at the time, but her delivery was not expected for several weeks and her husband had no hesitation in leaving her. The hunters were absent for three full days and nights, and returned home soon after dusk of the fourth day having had great success. When they landed at the beach they were surprised to see no lights in any of the houses except their own. Leaving two of his sons in the canoe, Nu'skoɓɛlɛxɛmx and the other lad cautiously approached the house. As they drew near, they realised that the light which shone forth was green, and unearthly, and that the smoke too was greenish instead of white. Looking through the door, Nu'skoɓɛlɛxɛmx saw his wife standing with bowed head dangling an infant in a cradle suspended from a cord. This is a common method of soothing a child, but Nu'skoɓɛlɛxɛmx was horrified to see that the cradle had been fastened to the cord upside down so that the infant was hanging head downwards, with no visible fastening to prevent it from falling to the floor.

"Look out! The child will fall and be killed", Nu'skoɓɛlɛxɛmx called out to his wife

but she did not seem to hear him.

The husband entered the house and touched ~~his wife, who~~ her. But she crumbled to bones at his feet. The watching son cried out in ~~his~~ fear and horror. Nu'skoɓɩlɩxɩmx hastily left the house and the two returned to the canoe after ascertaining that no living people were in the village.

The four hunters slept that night in their canoe and next morning Nu'skoɓɩlɩxɩmx prowled around until he found the ~~other occupants of the~~ village ~~s~~ hiding in the forest not far ~~m~~ away. They explained that, two days after his departure, his wife had given birth to a child, but the after-birth had not come away and she had died. ~~This~~ 24 was the first time that this had ever happened and the people had fled from the village in fear.

Nu'skoɓɩlɩxɩmx knew that the ghosts would dance to welcome his wife on the fourth day after her death and he determined to attempt to rescue her on that occasion. On the evening of the second day, the fourth after ~~his wife's~~ her death, he ~~him~~ and his three sons lurked in the vicinity of their house. ~~After a time~~ Presently they heard the sound of drums, which they knew must herald the approach of ghosts, so they hid themselves on the roof of their ~~own~~ house in such positions that they could peer down within. In some unknown way the four had been granted the power to see ghosts, for ~~presently~~ they observed the entry of what seemed to them to be ordinary human beings, though in reality they were wraiths. These took ~~their~~ the ~~position~~ like ~~surroundings~~ spectators at a ceremony, while several ~~who had~~ with beating sticks ~~occupied the place~~ seated themselves behind the fire as singers. As they struck their batons on the floor, one of the ghosts began to dance in time to the music, and Nu'skoɓɩlɩxɩmx's wife came to life and watched. Two ghosts who were directing the ceremony called out, "i···a···i···a···", which are words in the language of the dead and serve to invite some supernatural being from above to ~~attend~~ one of their ceremonies. In answer to the call, there came a thump on the roof, marking the descent of the supernatural visitor. This ~~entered~~ gave ~~the~~ power to move ~~to~~ the dead woman and she began to dance around the fire. She had completed one circuit and was on her second when one of the ghosts called out:

"Take care! I feel as if living people were watching us."

Some of the ghosts at once left the house and searched ~~in~~ the bushes near it.

"No," they said on their return, "No one is near."

Nu'skoɛ·lɪxɛmx's wife continued her dance, and as she was circling the fire for the third time, her husband whispered to his sons:

"As she goes round the fourth time we must jump down, catch her, and flee to our canoe."

When the woman ~~[illegible]~~ was midway in her fourth circuit, the four leapt into the house and Nu'skoɛ·lɪxɛmx clutched his wife in his arms. She crumbled to bones at his touch and the ghosts rushed away, whistling angrily, leaving the four alone, Nu'skoɛ·lɪxɛmx holding the skeleton of his wife. Then they went ~~away~~ and joined the other inhabitants of the village in their hiding-place. Everyone was anxious to hear the outcome of the attempt, though some did not believe the story. Nu'skoɛ·lɪxɛmx made no further effort to ~~regain~~ rescue his wife, knowing that it would be hopeless after the fourth day when the ghosts had welcomed her as one of themselves.

.....

An Inadvertant Visit to the Land of Ghosts.

A few years after the first settlement of the earth, four Kinsquit men went into the mountains to hunt ~~mountain~~ goats. The first night of their absence, before they had killed any ~~quarry~~ game, they lay down to sleep in a cave. Nothing disturbed their rest, but when they awoke in the morning they were amazed to find themselves in a strange country. They were near a wooded valley through which flowed a river resembling the Salmon River, but ~~[illegible]~~ instead of the sun, there was shining in the sky an orb that gave forth a green, sickly light. Unknown to them, the cave in which they had been sleeping had turned over on itself and projected them into the land of ghosts. The four brothers descended into the valley and walked up the bank of the river until they saw a large village on the other bank. It seemed to contain countless inhabitants who were amusing themselves by rolling to and fro with their feet a large, round object like a foot-ball. This game is not played by the Indians of British Columbia, so the four travellers began to think they must be in the land of ghosts, though they were puzzled to know how they had reached it. They ~~called~~ started across to the players, but though the river was narrow and though they ~~called~~ shouted loudly and repeatedly, they received no answer. The reason for this, as they later discovered, ~~is~~ was that the language of ghosts differs from that of human beings

and neither can hear the speech of the other. After a considerable interval, the third brother, who was sleepy, happened to yawn noisily; all the ghosts heard this sound and stopped their play to see ~~from whence~~ whence it had come. They saw the four at once and called to them that they would send a canoe to bring them across the river. Two of the ghosts manned a large, skin canoe and poled it across, but as the bow touched the bank where they were standing, the eldest brother pointed out to his fellows that it was transparent. They all looked down into it and could see sticks and stones on the bottom of the river through the floor of the craft. They were somewhat nervous about trusting themselves in such a canoe, but the eldest shut his eyes and jumped aboard without mishap, ~~and action which was~~ followed by the other three. They soon landed on the beach in front of the village, but before anyone of the four could set foot on the ground the ghosts who had come crowding around picked them up in their arms. Each was tossed by his holder to another ghost further inland, and in this way they were gently thrown from hand to hand until deposited within the house of the chief without using their feet and without a single ghost having had to move from the spot where he had been standing.

The four human beings found themselves in a large house crowded with what seemed to be people, but what they knew must be ghosts. At that distant period, ~~people~~ men were wiser than they are to-day, and the brothers realised that the chief must be Atlätiai ~~t~~ himself. Ghost-heralds brought food to the four strangers but they, ~~remembering what~~ concealed it beneath their capes instead of eating it, remembering what they had heard at Kimsquit that a person who eats the food of the dead can never leave their home. The chief was kind to them and somewhat facetiously told them that they would come to harm if they stayed in a country where the people played as much as they did in his. He added that they could return to earth by the same route by which they had come, and advised them to hurry back. After as short a visit as they thought polite, they asked to be ferried back across the river and retraced their steps to the cave where they had slept the previous night. It was dusk by this time and they lay down to sleep. During the night the cave rotated on itself once more, and in the morning they were delighted to find themselves in the mountains above the Salmon River.

This was the first time that anyone had penetrated to the land of ghosts and the friends of the four brothers were intensely interested in their account of their experiences ~~there~~. It was October at the time, but they explained that it was late winter in the land below. No one knows why or how the four brothers had received the power to pass into the land of ghosts although it is assumed that Alquntam must have granted them the boon.

.....

A Kitlobe Story of a Descent to the Land of ~~the~~ Ghosts.

The following story was related by an elderly Bella Coola who had heard it about ten years previously from three Christian Kitlobe who had been his fellow-passengers on a steamship between Vancouver and Bella Coola. It is not a Bella Coola story, although it has been circulated among members of the tribe as an interesting tale. The facts recorded in it do not agree entirely with ~~native~~ their beliefs, ~~concerning the land of ghosts~~, but that is a matter of no consequence to the Bella Coola. They have their own knowledge, and consider it quite natural that other tribes should have other ~~beliefs.~~ concepts.

About one year before the story was told, a Kitlobe woman had died, leaving ~~to mourn~~ her husband and one grown-up daughter to mourn her ~~deceased~~. The husband refused to be comforted, and used to fall into a paroxysm of weeping whenever he saw any of his wife's clothing or goods. About a week after her funeral he took her clothing to the cemetery intending to burn it, but instead sat down on the ground to weep. Presently he noticed a passage beside him, down which he crawled until he came to a flat, rich country, more prosperous than this world. He wandered along aimlessly till he heard the sound of singing and hid himself behind a clump of bushes. There seemed to be five or six groups of people in different sections of the country and the song was taken up in succession by ~~every~~ each group. When he had remained in his hiding-place for some time, two people ~~xxxx~~ in new, white clothing passed so close to him that he could hear the rustling of ~~the xxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ their garments. ~~xxxxxxxx~~ He recognised one of the passers-by as his wife, and the other as a fellow-villager who had died some time previously. Somewhat perturbed at finding his wife apparently on friendly terms with a male ghost, the husband decided to return home and ponder before taking any rash steps.

He crawled back ~~through~~ along the passage to the cemetery and at once burnt his wife's clothing.

When he ~~returned~~ reached home his daughter, who had been worried at his long absence, saw that her father had been weeping and tried to console him. He told her rather brusquely not to interrupt, ~~and~~ but as he was eating, recounted what he had seen that day, ~~and of~~ stating his determination to return the ~~following day~~ morning once and bring back his dead wife. His daughter begged him not to do so, reminding him that her ~~fx~~ mother had died of her own volition and that it would be dangerous to bring her back to earth. But the grieving father paid no attention to her appeal~~s~~.

Next morning the man went again to the cemetery where he found the passage still ~~available~~ open. He went down, hid in the same thicket, and heard the same singing taken up by group after group. As ~~onx~~ the previous day, after a considerable period of waiting, his wife passed by in company with the same male ghost. ~~Her~~ The husband rushed forth, seized her and shoved away her companion who ran ~~awayx~~ off discomfited. ~~Hix~~ The woman offered no resistance, ~~to the censure~~ captor, and her husband told her that he was going to take her back home again. The two returned to the passage, the ~~husband~~ man guided his dead wife ~~thx~~ through it to the cemetery, and thence they set out for their house.

Meanwhile the daughter, dreading what might transpire, had remained within. As her father opened the door, she cowered at the side of the house and saw that his hand was held out as if he ~~had~~ were leading someone, though only one figure was visible to her. Her fear ~~inx~~ increased when she heard lighter foot-steps accompanying his, and the rustling of clothing. She heard her father tell his wife, whom he addressed by name, that he would leave her in the main part of the house for a moment while he arranged the bed-room; he set about this, but though the daughter eagerly looked for her mother, she was invisible. When the father returned, he led his wife to the bed-room, but to the daughter it seemed as if he had put out his arm to guide nothing more tangible than air. The frightened girl could hear her father~~xx xxixx~~ asking questions and giving answers as if in conversation, but her mother's voice was inaudible. ~~judgingxfromxhisxremarks,xthexdaughterxconcluded~~ The daughter ~~thex~~ heard her father ask how her mother liked the land below and, judging from his later comments, concluded that she had ~~repitied that~~ said it was preferable to the land of the living except for the scarcity of food. The mother must have added that for this reason ghosts visit the houses of human beings, ~~and~~ to knock crumbs to the ground with minute hooks, and punish by beating with ~~thex~~ their barbs anyone who offends them by picking up

such morsels. The girl heard her father say that in future he would be more careful to throw fragments of food on the fire, since he now knew that these ~~are~~ were desired by the dead, but ~~that they are most unhappy without~~ were necessary to them. Her mother must have asked whether they had eaten all the dried salmon, for her father answered:

"No. We have been so grief-stricken at your death that ~~he~~ we have eaten hardly anything."

After a pause the girl heard her father say "All right", and judged that her mother had said she would go to get some. In a moment the door opened, though no one appeared, and the thoroughly awed girl heard the sound of light foot-steps. She saw the ropes with which the box was bound unloosened without visible agent, and the salmon piled in a neat heap on the floor. Then this seemed to rise of its own accord from the floor and pass out through the front-doorx without human aid. After an interval the father appeared and asked ~~xhmxx~~ his daughter where her mother had gone. The frightened girl told what she had seen, and both were amazed and puzzled. At last it dawned on the grieving husband that his wife must have stolen the food for the benefit of her friends below and had returned to her new home.

The husband, now twice bereaved, was filled with woe at this second loss which was unexpected as his wife had said nothing of her intention of leaving. After deliberating for several days, he descended again to the land of ghosts, heedless of his daughter's appeals. He concealed himself in the same spot as before, and soon heard singing. This time the words and tune were different and he listened intently. To his horror, the theme was of the ingenuity of a dead woman who had ~~returned to~~ revisited her home, deceived her husband, and brought away a supply of dried salmon for the use of the ghosts. He recognised that the song must refer to his own wife and, grieved and humiliated, he returned home forthwith. He warned his daughter to say nothing of what had occurred and she obeyed his instructions, not wishing their shame to become known. A few days later, however, a number of friends gathered to console the husband; he became intoxicated, ~~xxx~~ told the guests his adventures, and taught them the songs used by the dead.

.....

A Carrier Story of an Ascent to the Land of the Dead.

The following, like the last, is not a Bella Coola story. It is one known to a number

of Kimsquit and deserves inclusion among Bella Coola tales if only for the reason that stories of foreign origin, when told sufficiently often, tend to be considered indigenous and the facts recorded in them accepted and incorporated into Bella Coola belief. This factor is undoubtedly responsible for many conflicting elements in ~~Bella Coola~~ Their theology. The following story ~~gives~~ has every indication of Christian, ~~probably Catholic~~ influence, but is not less interesting on that account, as illustrating the ~~xxxx~~ process of assimilating new ideas into mythology. (1)

About fifty years ago, Mämaiyu, a Xɛxais Indian from Cootsa Lake, and his brother were trapping beaver in one of the lakes of the interior. They were both good hunters and every morning killed at least one of the animals. Mämaiyu was a strong, apparently healthy man, but one morning he fell dead. His grief-stricken brother ~~was filled with grief, and~~ was ~~also~~ puzzled to know what to do with the body. It was winter and the heavy snow and frozen earth made interment impossible, while lack of fire-wood made cremation out of the question. So he merely tied up the corpse ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ to await better weather. Meanwhile Mämaiyu had gone aloft where he saw a huge house containing many rooms. He went to the first of these where a man was sitting with a huge book before him.

"What do you want?" asked the man.

Mämaiyu did not answer and his questioner continued:

"Your name is not here. Why did you come?"

This happened in one room after another, for Mämaiyu tried them all. Finally, ~~when~~ at ~~xxxxxxx~~ the end of the house~~x, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ he came to the seat of the chief who said to him:

"You have made a mistake. The time for you ~~xxxxxx~~ has not yet come. If you want to stay, you can do so by drinking ~~a glass of~~ this."

~~At this point~~ he showed Mamaiyu a glass containing a green liquid.

"If not", continued the chief, "you must drink this", and he showed him another glass filled with a white liquid.

(1). This story was related by Jim Pollard, an elderly Kimsquit who stated that as a young man he had known Mämaiyu, who was about fifty years older than he. Psychologically, this ~~story~~ tale is interesting as showing the manner in which a miraculous account can become accepted as fact within a short space of time. Mämaiyu must have been a man of imaginative temperament who was convinced that he had experienced incidents told to him by some white man.

THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY

TORONTO 5, CANADA

CABLE ADDRESS:
ROMA, TORONTO

AGENTS IN ENGLAND:
THOMAS MEADOWS & CO., LTD.,
35, MILK STREET,
LONDON, E.C. 2.

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOLOGY

Throughout this speech Mämaiyu had heard a strange rumbling and wondered what could be its cause. Happening to glance out through a window at the rear of the house, he saw a huge, metal ball, constantly revolving and giving forth the rumbling sound as it did so. From within ~~he heard~~ came sounds of wailing, and at intervals ~~he saw~~ an agonised face appeared at one of the many small openings in the surface of the sphere. The supreme being, for ~~of course~~ the chief was none other, told him that those within the ball were evil persons, those who had ~~been thieves~~ committed theft or murderers during life. Mämaiyu, though ~~he had committed neither of these crimes~~ innocent of these crimes, decided that he would be safer on earth and asked for the glass with the white liquid which he hastily drained. The supreme deity ~~asked him~~ enquired what present he would like as token of the visit, and he requested a beaver-axe, that is, ~~an one~~ one with a crooked handle such as beaver use. The Bella Coola know that beaver must have axes of this kind to accomplish their work, although white people, deceived by the invisibility of these, believe that ~~beaver~~ the animals use their teeth. Mämaiyu received an axe of this type.

At the moment ~~that~~ when Mämaiyu drank the white liquid, his brother saw his body move very slightly. He hastily warmed some mountain goat grease and with this rubbed ~~the patient's~~ his face and mouth. At first he was unable to speak, owing to ~~the~~ his muscles having become rigid from the cold, but they loosened gradually so that he was able to recount his experiences. Mämaiyu's axe, being of supernatural origin, was invisible to all human beings. This did not affect its potency, and from that time onwards ~~Mamaiyu~~ the owner could catch beaver as easily as other men could catch salmon.

The information contained in this story does not correspond at all with Bella Coola beliefs concerning the ~~fate~~ of the dead. They tell it, and assume that such experiences are normal for dead X·xais, though unknown ~~for~~ to their own people.

THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY

TORONTO 5, CANADA

CABLE ADDRESS:
ROMA, TORONTO

AGENTS IN ENGLAND:
THOMAS MEADOWS & CO., LTD.,
35, MILK STREET,
LONDON, E.C. 2.

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOLOGY